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# THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER



THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER  
AND OTHER FAIRY POEMS

X821

*Illustrated by*

BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF



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Fairies" by William Allingham, and "The  
Forsaken Merman" by Matthew Arnold.



## THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER

Little Cowboy, what have you heard,  
Up on the lonely rath's green  
mound?  
Only the plaintive yellow bird  
Sighing in sultry fields around,  
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee!—  
Only the grasshopper and the bee?—





“Tip-tap, rip-rap,  
Tick-a-tack-too!  
Scarlet leather, sewn together,  
This will make a shoe.  
Left, right, pull it tight;  
Summer days are warm;  
Underground in winter,  
Laughing at the storm!”

Lay your ear close to the hill.  
Do you not catch the tiny clamour,  
Busy click of elfin hammer,  
Voice of the Lepracaun singing  
    shrill  
As he merrily plies his trade?  
    He's a span  
    And a quarter in height.

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Get him in sight, hold him tight,  
And you're a made  
Man!  
You watch your cattle the summer day,  
Sup on potatoes, sleep in the hay;  
How would you like to roll in your  
carriage,  
Look for a duchess's daughter in  
marriage?





Seize the Shoemaker—then you may!

“Big boots a-hunting,  
Sandals in the hall,  
White for a wedding-feast,  
Pink for a ball.

This way, that way,  
So we make a shoe;  
Getting rich every stitch,  
Tick-tack-too!"

Nine-and-ninety treasure-crocks  
This keen miser-fairy hath,  
Hid in mountains, woods and rocks,  
Ruin and round-tow'r, cave and rath,  
And where the cormorants build;

From time of old  
Guarded by him;  
Each of them fill'd  
Full to the brim  
With gold!





I caught him at work one day, myself,  
In the castle-ditch, where foxglove  
grows,—

A wrinkled, wizen'd, and bearded Elf,  
Spectacles stuck on his pointed nose,  
Silver buckles to his hose,  
Leather apron—shoe in his lap—

“Rip-rap, tip-tap,  
Tack-tack-too!  
(A grasshopper on my cap!  
    Away the moth flew!)  
Buskins for a fairy prince,  
    Brogues for his son,—  
Pay me well, pay me well,  
    When the job is done!”

The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt.  
I stared at him; he stared at me;  
‘Servant, Sir!’ ‘Humph!’ says he,  
    And pull’d a snuff-box out.  
He took a long pinch, look’d better  
    pleased,  
    The queer little Lepracaun;  
Offer’d the box with a whimsical  
    grace,—

Pouf! he flung the dust in my face,  
And, while I sneezed,  
Was gone!

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.







## THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen,  
We daren't go a-hunting  
For fear of little men;

Wee folk, good folk,  
Trooping all together;  
Green jacket, red cap,  
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore  
Some make their home,  
They live on crispy pancakes  
Of yellow tide-foam;





Some in the reeds  
Of the black mountain lake,  
With frogs for their watch-dogs,  
All night awake.

High on the hill-top  
The old King sits;  
He is now so old and gray  
He's nigh lost his wits.





With a bridge of white mist  
Columbkill he crosses,  
On his stately journeys  
From Slieveleague to Rosses;

Or going up with music  
On cold starry nights  
To sup with the Queen  
Of the gay Northern Lights.





They stole little Bridget  
For seven years long;  
When she came down again  
Her friends were all gone.  
They took her lightly back,  
Between the night and morrow,  
They thought that she was fast asleep,  
But she was dead with sorrow.

They have kept her ever since  
Deep within the lake,  
On a bed of flag-leaves,  
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,  
Through the mosses bare,  
They have planted thorn-trees  
For pleasure here and there.

If any man so daring  
As dig them up in spite,  
He shall find their sharpest thorns  
In his bed at night.





Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen,  
We daren't go a-hunting  
For fear of little men;  
Wee folk, good folk,  
Trooping all together;  
Green jacket, red cap,  
And white owl's feather.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.





SLEEPYHEAD

As I lay awake in the white moonlight,  
I heard a faint singing in the wood,





“Out of bed,  
Sleepyhead,  
Put your white foot, now;  
Here are we  
Beneath the tree  
Singing round the root now.”

I looked out of window, in the white  
    moonlight,  
The leaves were like snow in the wood—  
    “Come away,  
        Child, and play  
    Light with the gnomies;

In a mound,  
Green and round,  
That's where their home is.

“Honey sweet,  
Curds to eat,  
Cream and frumenty,  
Shells and beads,  
Poppy seeds,  
You shall have plenty.”





But, as soon as I stooped in the dim  
    moonlight  
    To put on my stocking and my shoe,  
The sweet shrill singing echoed faintly  
    away,  
    And the grey of the morning peeped  
        through,  
And instead of the gnomies there came  
    a red robin  
    To sing of the buttercups and dew.

WALTER DE LA MARE.





BERRIES

There was an old woman  
Went blackberry picking  
Along the hedges  
From Weep to Wicking.  
Half a potte—  
No more had she got,  
When out steps a Fairy  
From her green grot;

And says, "Well, Jill,  
Would 'ee pick 'ee mo?"  
And Jill, she curtseys,  
And looks just so.  
"Be off," says the Fairy,  
"As quick as you can,  
Over the meadows  
To the little green lane,

That dips to the hayfields  
Of Farmer Grimes:  
I've berried those hedges  
A score of times;  
Bushel on bushel  
I'll promise 'ee, Jill,  
This side of supper  
If 'ee pick with a will."





She glints very bright,  
And speaks her fair;  
Then lo, and behold!  
She has faded in air.

Be sure old Goodie  
She trots betimes  
Over the meadows  
To Farmer Grimes.  
And never was queen  
With jewellery rich  
As those same hedges  
From twig to ditch;

Like Dutchmen's coffers,  
Fruit, thorn, and flower—  
They shone like William  
And Mary's bower.  
And be sure old Goodie  
Went back to Weep,  
So tired with her basket  
She scarce could creep.

When she comes in the dusk  
To her cottage door,  
There's Towser wagging  
As never before,  
To see his Missus  
So glad to be  
Come from her fruit-picking  
Back to he.





—

As soon as next morning  
Dawn was grey,  
The pot on the hob  
Was simmering away;  
And all in a stew  
And a hugger-mugger  
Towser and Jill  
A-boiling of sugar,

And the dark clear fruit  
That from Faërie came,  
For syrup and jelly  
And blackberry jam.

Twelve jolly gallipots  
Jill put by;

And one little teeny one,  
One inch high;  
And that she's hidden  
A good thumb deep,  
Half way over  
From Wicking to Weep.

WALTER DE LA MARE.



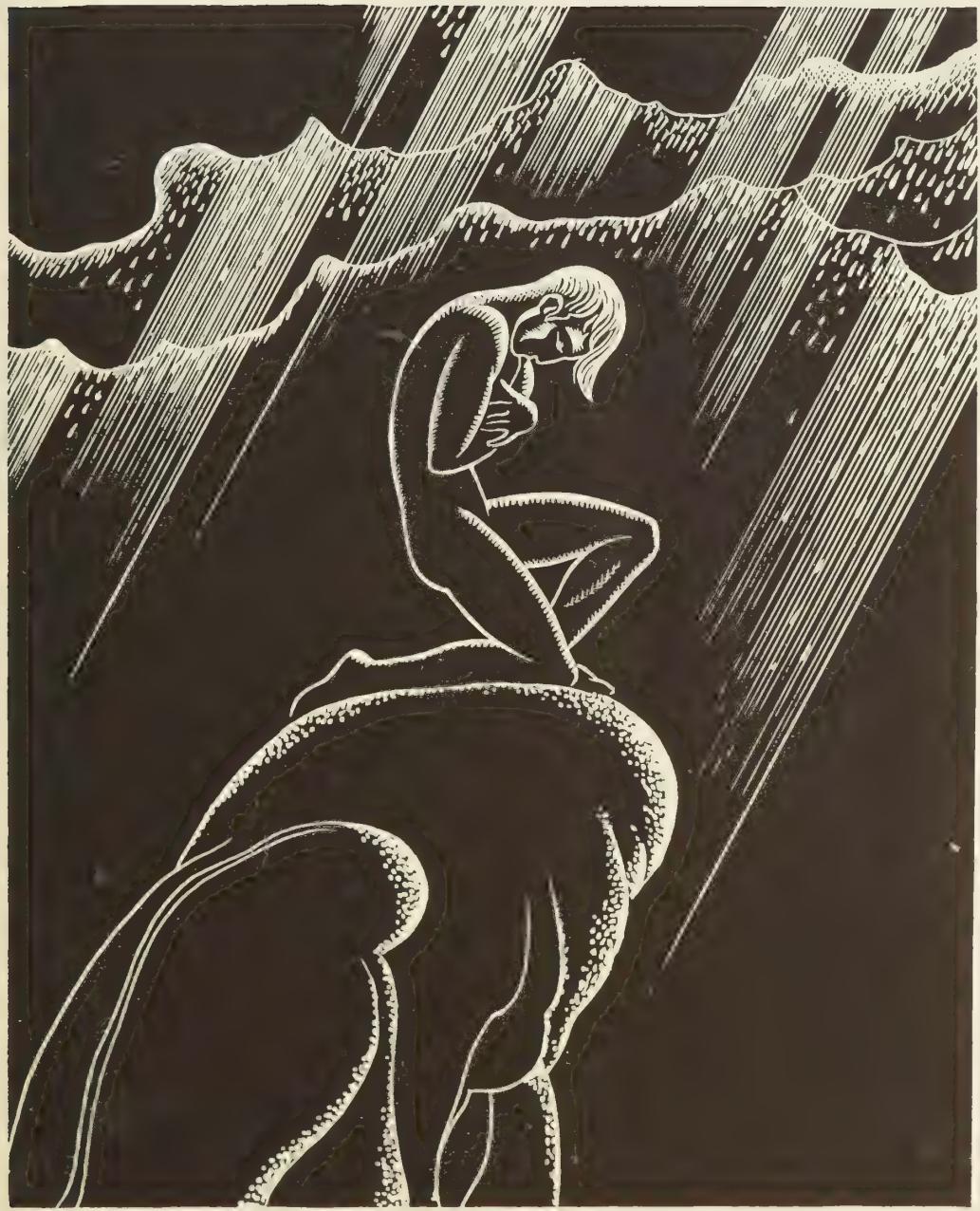


## THE FORSAKEN MERMAN



Come, dear children, let us away;  
Down and away below!  
Now my brothers call from the bay,  
Now the great winds shoreward blow,  
Now the salt tides seaward flow;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.  
Children dear, let us away!  
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go.—  
Call once yet!





In a voice that she will know:  
    “Margaret! Margaret!”  
Children’s voices should be dear.  
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear;  
Children’s voices, wild with pain,—  
    Surely she will come again!  
Call her once and come away;  
    This way, this way!  
“Mother dear, we cannot stay!  
The wild white horses foam and fret.”  
    Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;  
Call no more!  
One last look at the white-wall'd town,  
And the little grey church on the windy  
shore;  
Then come down!  
She will not come, though you call all  
day;  
Come away, come away!  
Children dear, was it yesterday  
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?

In the caverns where we lay,  
Through the surf and through the swell,  
The far-off sound of a silver bell?  
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,  
Where the winds are all asleep;  
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,  
Where the salt weed sways in the  
stream,  
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,  
Feed in the ooze of their pasture ground;

Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,  
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;  
Where great whales come sailing by,  
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,  
Round the world for ever and aye?





When did music come this way?  
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday  
(Call yet once) that she went away?  
Once she sate with you and me,  
On a red gold throne in the heart of  
    the sea,  
And the youngest sate on her knee,

She comb'd its bright hair, and she  
tended it well,  
When down swung the sound of a far-off  
bell.  
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the  
clear green sea;

She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk  
    pray  
In the little grey church on the shore  
    today.  
"Twill be Easter time in the world,—  
    ah me!  
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here  
    with thee."

I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the  
waves:  
Say thy prayer, and come back to the  
kind sea-caves!"  
She smiled, she went up through the surf  
in the bay.  
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?  
“The sea grows stormy, the little ones  
moan;  
Long prayers,” I said, “in the world  
they say;  
Come!” I said, and we rose through the  
surf in the bay.  
We went up the beach, by the sandy down  
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-  
wall’d town,

Through the narrow paved streets, where  
    all was still,  
To the little grey church on the windy  
    hill.  
From the church came a murmur of folk  
    at their prayers,  
But we stood without in the cold blowing  
    airs.  
We climbed on the graves, on the stones  
    worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the  
small leaded panes.

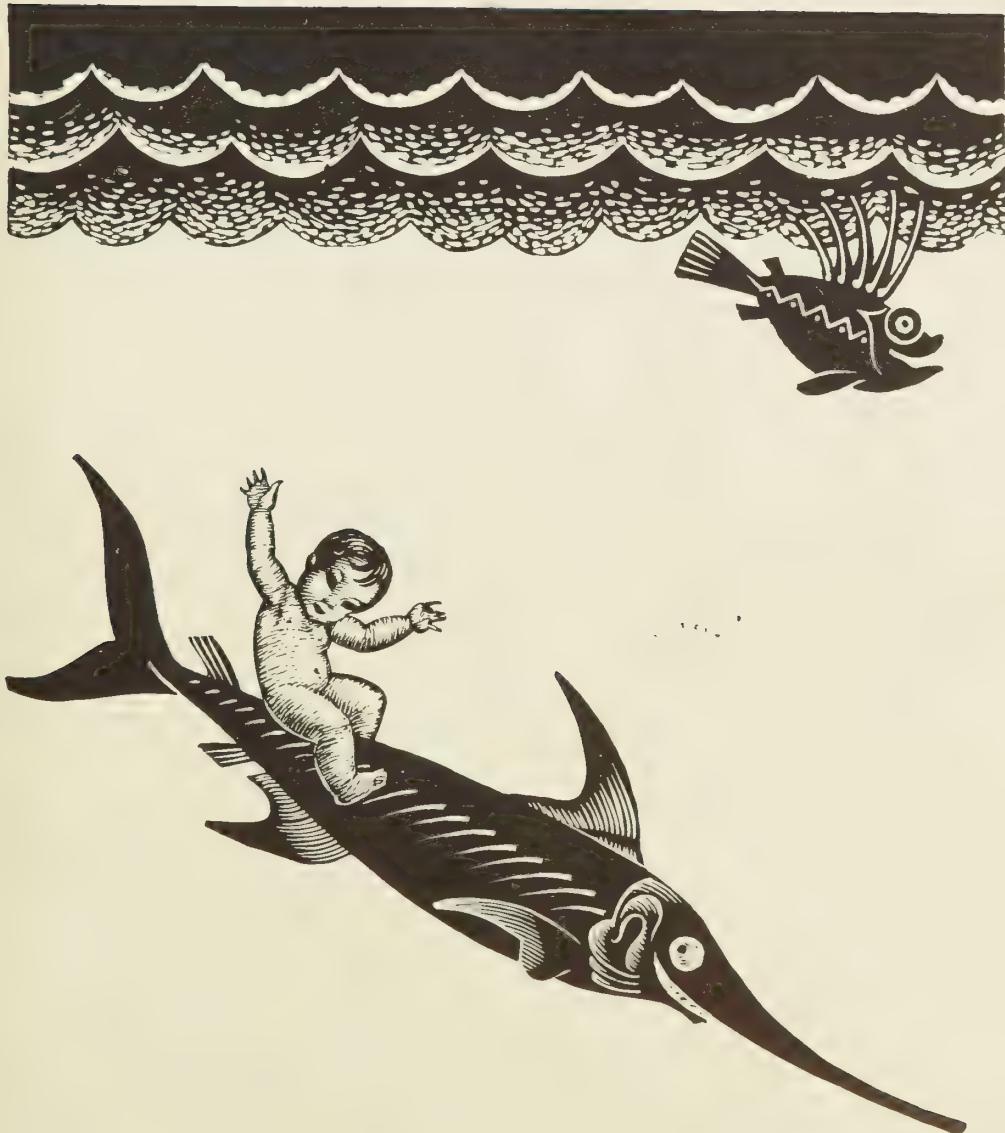
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:  
“Margaret, hist! come quick, we are  
here!

Dear heart,” I said, “we are long alone;  
The sea grows stormy, the little ones  
moan.”

But, ah, she gave me never a look,  
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!  
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the  
door.  
Come away, children, call no more!  
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!  
Down to the depths of the sea!

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She sits at her wheel in the humming  
town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,  
For the humming street, and the child  
with its toy!

For the priest, and the bell, and the holy  
well;

For the wheel where I spun,  
And the blessed light of the sun!"

And so she sings her fill,  
Sings most joyfully,  
Till the spindle drops from her hand,  
And the whizzing wheel stands still.  
She steals to the window, and looks  
at the sand,

And over the sand at the sea;  
And her eyes are set in a stare,  
And anon there breaks a sigh,  
And anon there drops a tear,  
From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
And a heart sorrow-laden,

A long, long sigh;  
For the cold strange eyes of a little  
Mermaiden  
And the gleam of her golden hair.





Come away, away, children;  
Come, children, come down!  
The hoarse wind blows coldly;  
Lights shine in the town.  
She will start from her slumber  
When gusts shake the door;  
She will hear the winds howling,  
Will hear the waves roar.





We shall see, while above us  
The waves roar and whirl,  
A ceiling of amber,  
A pavement of pearl.  
Singing: “Here came a mortal,  
But faithless was she!  
And alone dwell for ever  
The kings of the sea.”

But, children, at midnight,  
When soft the winds blow,  
When clear falls the moonlight,  
When spring-tides are low;  
When sweet airs come seaward  
From heaths starr'd with broom,  
And high rocks throw mildly  
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;

Up the still, glistening beaches,  
Up the creeks we will hie;  
Over banks of high seaweed  
The ebb-tide leaves dry.  
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,  
At the white, sleeping town;  
At the church on the hill-side—  
And then come back down.  
Singing: “There dwells a loved one,  
But cruel is she!  
She left lonely for ever  
The kings of the sea.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD.















*Sp Coll*

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